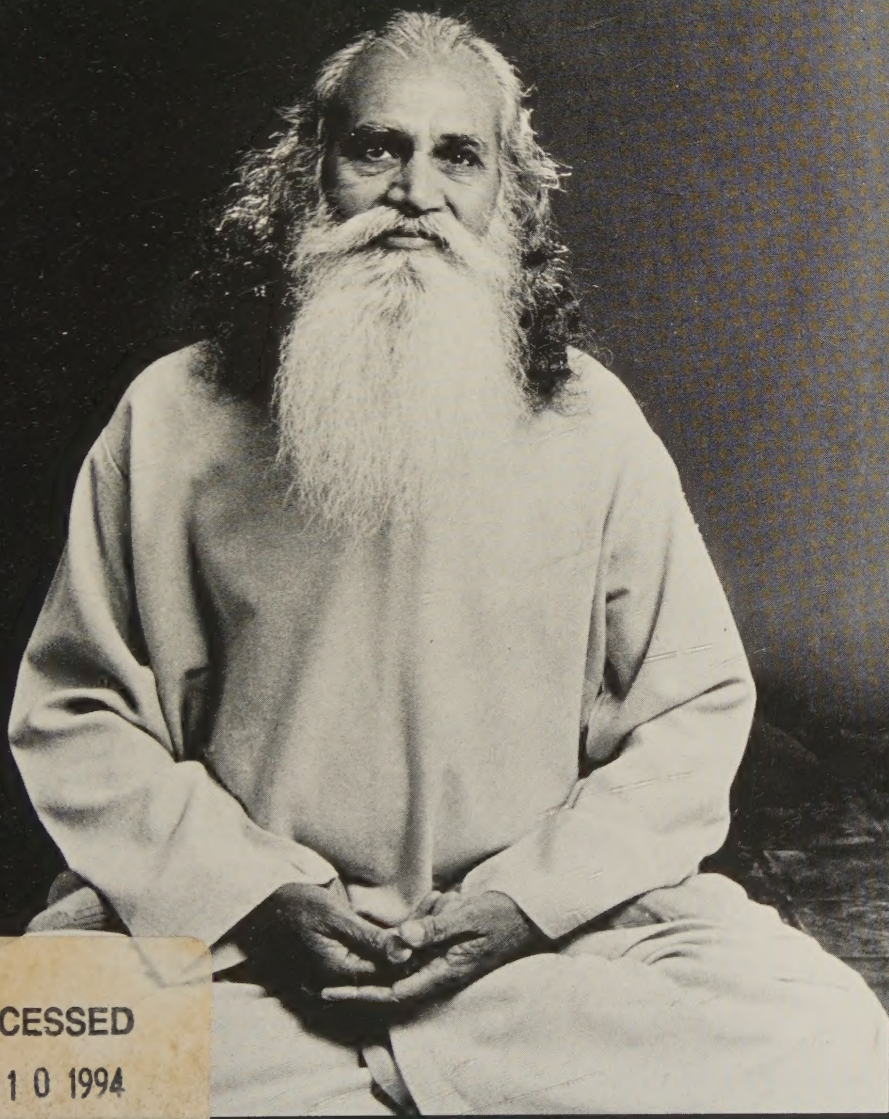


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THE TEACHINGS OF
SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Spring 1994
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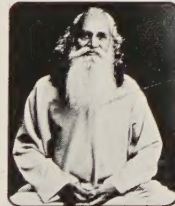
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INTEGRAL YOGA® AND YOU

INTEGRAL YOGA® Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. In these centers the Integral Yoga teachings of Sri Swami Satchidananda are lived and shared. The centers offer ongoing programs in the various branches of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga - as well as instruction in yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teacher training programs, universal worship services and retreats for both beginners and more advanced students. Resident programs, providing an opportunity to experience total yogic living, are also available.

A wide range of guest programs are offered at the Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. Located at the Virginia Ashram are: the Audio-Video, Publishing and Distribution departments, the Fine Arts Society, the elementary school, an affiliated Credit Union, and the international coordination offices for all Integral Yoga centers.

The LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine), a shrine dedicated to the Light of all faiths and to world peace, is open to the public and is located in Yogaville, Virginia.

For more information, to arrange an Integral Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed inside the back cover of this Magazine. We are here to serve you.

LETTERS TO

I took Teacher Training this past August, and I have been teaching ever since returning to New York City. The training has proved invaluable. Also, you gave me my Sanskrit name, Priya, which reminds me to try to have compassion for the "beloved of God" in everyone. Thank you for assisting me in doing this.

There are some things in my life that are not quite right and that I'd like to correct. I feel as though you already know me and that you help me in your heart by prayer. This seems more effective than words right now. Thank you. OM Shanthi.

—P. D.

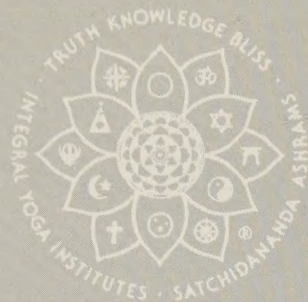
New York City

SRI GURUDEV

I have read the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* and *The Living Gita* and have found them both very meaningful in helping me to understand my life.

As a householder, I am trying to find the balance between disciplined Yoga practice and my responsibilities to family and work. You have given me great inspiration to find my True Nature. Daily, I try to find the strength inside to control the senses and reach for the true goal.

—R. E.
Yardley, PA



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SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA (called "Sri Gurudev" by his students) is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual teacher, and Guru of the students of Integral Yoga. Dedicated to the ecumenical movement, his motto is: "Truth is One, Paths are Many." His main residence is in Buckingham, Virginia. In response to invitations from all around the globe, Sri Gurudev travels widely. Through every possible medium—lectures, conferences, radio, television and newspaper interviews, books and visits to centers around the world—he shares his knowledge in the fields of education, religion, health and Yoga.



SATSANG WITH SRI GURUDEV

Question: How can we reconcile exercising our will and surrendering to the Lord without creating more egoism?

Sri Gurudev: How can you develop egoism if you surrender to the Lord? If you surrender to the Lord, there's no room for egoism. You cannot surrender and, at the same time, have egoism. No. Maybe the decision to surrender could be based on your egoism: "I want to surrender." This means that you are using egoism for a right purpose; then the job of egoism is over, because ego can take you to that level.

Actually, that is the purpose of ego. Your "I" should take you toward God and just leave you there, saying, "I did my job. Now it's your business. I have nothing to do." So, ego is not that bad. Ego can take you away from God or it can take you toward God. It all depends on how you use it. In fact, without ego you wouldn't even be coming to an ashram. Is it not so? "I have to come to the ashram." Here, you are using your ego to take you to the right place. The same ego can take you to Las Vegas.

Remember that. Egoism by itself is not bad. It's how you use your ego. If it takes you toward God, it's a good ego. And there again, the ego is limited, for it *almost* takes you close to God; it says, "That's the guy. Go. I can't go there with you, because it's completely private between you and Him." The ego is *almost* the best man or the bridesmaid. What does the bridesmaid do? She brings the bride to the bridegroom and

says, "This is your guy. Go." The bridesmaid should not say, "I am the one who brought you; I will also be coming with you." Her job is over. In the same way, egoism should be your bridesmaid. It can take you to the groom and, without staying, leave you there alone with him.

This is a beautiful analogy. Make your ego a bridesmaid or best man—until you reach your partner. Once you meet your partner and the two of you are going to be alone, you can say to your ego, "Thank you. There's the way out, the door." And that we call pure *sattwa*.

According to the Hindu scriptures, we are bound by the three *gunas*, or *triguna*: *rajas* [activity], *tamas* [inertia] and *sattwa* [balanced state]. But the guru is defined as *triguna titha*, *triguna rahitam*. That is, the guru is not bound even by the three *gunas*. He first gets rid of *tamas* and then gets rid of

Ego can take you away from God or it can take you toward God. It all depends on how you use it.

rajas, also. He uses *sattwa* to take him up to God. And then, once he gets very close to God, the *sattwa* says, "All right; my job is over. Just go in. *Sattwa* stays behind." At that point, one becomes *triguna rahitam*. Until that point, one should become *sattwic*.

As a seeker, you are raising above *tamas* and *rajas*, trying to become *sattwic*, aiming toward the balanced state. Once you acquire the *sattwic* condition, then that state takes you toward God, saying, "Go! Goodbye!"

Question: My heart hurts very much. I am so in need of God. I am nothing without Him. I know that I have to surrender myself to Him. This is really what I want with all my

heart, but what does it really mean and what is it that I have to do?

Sri Gurudev: You don't have to do anything. If you know, "I am nothing without Him," "I know I have to surrender myself to Him," "That's really what I want with all my heart," then surrender. That's all. You don't have to worry about it. If you really surrender, there's no need to worry about anything. Even, "What can happen to me the next minute?" That's none of your business. God takes over, whatever it is. "God, You put me in a palace, fine; You threw me into a slum, fine; wherever You put me, I am happy. You are the one who is doing it. I accept."

Surrendering means accepting. Total contentment. No desire of your own—"You are the boss." What should you do? Do it; give it. It's almost like dropping it. "I am holding onto it; what should I do to drop it?" What should you do? Drop it. Easy to say; yes. And it's easy to do if you have that confidence first. We say it, but we don't seem to have that confidence. We don't really believe that "He will take really good care of me. I don't have to worry about that." We don't believe in that. It's very hard.

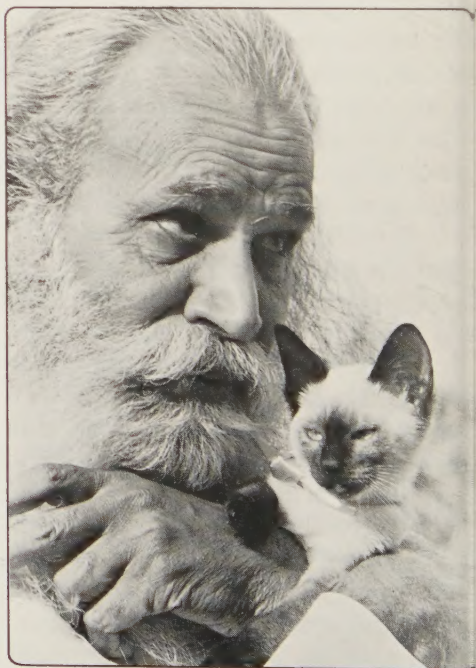
Take the baby monkey and the kitten. The baby monkey also trusts, totally depending upon the mother to move around. But, still, it says, "Mommy, I want to move around, but I will hold onto you; you take me wherever you want." The baby monkey has to keep on clinging to the mommy. But the kitten? No. "Mommy, I want to go, meow!" The mother cat comes and lifts it up. Here, the mother holds the baby. With monkeys, the baby holds the mother. See the difference? Both the baby monkey and the kitten depend upon the mother. In the baby monkey's case: "Though I depend on you, I am holding you." In the kitten's case: "Even holding is not my business. You hold me!"

So, what kind of surrender do you want? It's very easy to say, until the ego appears. But, one day, surrender comes. When? When all our wits come to an end. We say, "I've

come to my wit's end." Wherever you go, whatever you do, when you receive knocks and bumps from your own ego, then you say, "I'm sick and tired. I'm giving up."

You give up. And that giving up is what you call *sannyas*, surrender, renunciation. Until then, you really run around and Mother Nature prepares you. One day or another, it will happen to you. If you use your intelligence, it can happen easily, quickly. Otherwise, you will have some more extra bumps and knocks; and then, ultimately, with all the scars, you will surrender. That is the lesson that Mother Nature wants to teach us: that we cannot hold on to anything.

We cannot do anything by ourselves. We try, doing what we do within our limitations. We don't know why anything is happening. It's happening. Accept it. Finished. A big burden will be gone from your mind. You will be free. Under any situation, you will feel light, you will laugh, asking: "God, is that all, or can You do something more?" Everybody goes through the treadmill; nobody is spared. Read the life stories of any saint. Tests, tests, tests. We all have to go through them. ■



GIVING UP INTO THE HANDS OF GOD

by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Renounce everything

If you just put yourself totally in God's hand, every one of you can do much more in your life. Give up your ego. Give up the feeling that "I can do this." That feeling really interferes with everything. Instead, think, "Let God function through me."

Of all the *slokas* in the *Bhagavad Gita*, one *sloka* is called the supreme, the gem, the essence. This *sloka* comes almost toward the end, and it simply says, "Just give up everything. Renounce everything. Even your will, your ego, your intelligence, your foolishness, your everything."

Everything should be given up. It's not just simple renunciation. It should be complete renunciation of everything. In the *Living Gita*, we translate this as: "Renounce all duties (*dharma*s), and just come to Me for refuge. I will take you beyond sin and guilt, where there is neither grief nor sorrow." What a wonderful saying. Renounce all actions, all duties. Completely give up.

The Lord says, "Surrender yourself to Me. Know that I am the only one who does everything, who takes care of everything. I am the only refuge, the sole refuge. If you do that, I'll free you from all troubles, all problems, all your sins, virtues, whatever it is." He also says, "Don't doubt," because He knows the human mind. Having heard all this, still you might say, "Ah, maybe it's all just philosophy." But God knows how the human mind works, so, lastly, He says, "Don't doubt, please. I assure you." Literally, He says, "I promise you this because

you are my beloved."

In the beginning of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna exhausts all his arguments and intellectual gymnastics. He asks, "Why should I do all this? Why can't I keep quiet? Should I fight even when it's for a just cause?" He lists all the reasons not to do anything. He just wants to cop out, give up, run away to a cave. He asks, "What good are all these actions? What good is it to save all these people or kill all those so-called evil people? I didn't bring them; I'm not going to take them. It's not my duty."

Give up into the hands of God

Meanwhile, that beautiful, mischievous God, in the form of Lord Krishna, just watches him and smiles, "Okay, come on, come on. Empty it all out. Anything more?" And He simply nods and smiles as Arjuna talks. At last, Arjuna realizes that he is simply sounding, that's all. That is, he is creating sounds for an argument. But the argument is not sound, and he feels ashamed. Finally, Arjuna says, "What a fool I am. I'm blabbering, exhausting my intelligence. Why can't I do the simplest thing? Okay, Lord, that's it. I'm falling at Your feet; I surrender at Your feet. That's it. You do whatever you want; it's none of my business. I didn't create the world, and I'm not going to save it or destroy it. It's Your job. You did it. You created everything; You created me, too. You know what You are doing; please do it. I'm Your disciple." Then, the whole *Bhagavad Gita* starts.

Toward the end of the *Gita*, the Lord says this: "Give up everything. Become my

instrument. Let me do whatever I feel is right. Let me work through you. Then, you don't become responsible for anything and I can make the best use of you.

That is the beauty of giving up into the hands of God. Very simply, the saint, Avvayaar, said, "Renounce all wants, and you are home." If you give up all your, "I," "me," "mine," you are already liberated. You have freedom. You don't even have to write a constitution. The best constitution is to surrender everything to God. It's really very simple to do. Remember, it's easy to give up things; it's hard to hold onto them. With that holding on comes a lot of anxiety, worry, fear, jealousy, and on and on.

Another great saint said, "Lord, I don't mind what you do with me. People may give their opinions. Some may say 'right,' some may say 'wrong.' Should I worry? You are the one who is handling it all. You drive anywhere you want. Go to the movie, fine; go to the nightclub, fine; go to the church, fine. You are the one behind the wheel; You're the driver. And if You get into trouble, they don't punish me or the car; You are the culprit!" Similarly, you can't say to the police, "The car took me to rob the bank. Charge the car." No. The driver is responsible, not the driven. That's the driving force behind everything.

God Works through Everyone

I'm just telling you what I know, what I followed in my own life. If you like it, take it, try it. It's very simple. With this attitude of surrender, everything falls into place. Why should you hate anybody? Why should you dislike anybody? Everybody is good; everybody is wonderful; everybody is the instrument of God. God is working through everyone, not only through you. When you give up, you know that. You see God's hand in everything, every face. If somebody blames you, it's God. If somebody praises you, it's God. The moment you know that God is

working through you, you see the same hand working through everything. You see everyone with equal vision. Automatically, you begin to love everyone as you would love yourself. The entire nature is That. In fact, without God's force, not even an atom moves. Everything moves like that. We are all being moved. It's a *moving experience*. True.

So let God do whatever He wants. Who are you to even *let* Him do something? He does it anyway. He doesn't wait for your permission. We say, "God, do whatever You want." Does God say, "Oh, okay. Only now that I got your permission, will I do what I want"? See how the ego sneaks into everything? As if am permitting God, "You can do whatever You want now," and, until then, God was waiting. No. He was already doing it.

You will have the safest and the simplest and the happiest life if you surrender this way. Otherwise, your ego is in everything: "Oh, *I* should have taken care of that; " "*I* should have done this;" "*I* am responsible for that;" "*I* have to get something for those people." Aye, aye, aye!

On the other hand, surrender doesn't mean that you just simply don't do anything, that you go to your room and lie down. Yes, it's easy to do that also! No. When God prompts you to do something, do it. Remember, even the prompting to act comes from God. For instance, you might even feel guilty: "What is this? I am sitting idle, not doing anything, yet, at the same time, the ashram is feeding me, taking care of me. It's time I did something." Who makes you feel guilty? God again. So God, in a way, asks you to do something and then makes you do it; therefore, you are not responsible for it. Likewise, if somebody tells you something, it's not that somebody tells you; it's God telling you.

How Much Faith?

For that kind of surrender, you should have total faith in God. You may wonder, "Will God really take care of me if I

surrender like that?" That's up to you to decide. How much faith do you have? If you really trust in that way, everything will be taken care of. That's why I always say: "Faith and fear don't go together." If you have complete faith, there's no more questioning. God will never let you down.

Sometimes you might even say, "Look at this. I trusted God, but now something is hurting me. How could God let something or somebody hurt me?" That's where real surrender comes: "God let that person hurt me. Okay, so why should God let him hurt me? Maybe for my benefit. I probably needed that experience for some reason."

Sometimes, others take a patient to the hospital for an operation. The patient may not even understand that the operation will save her. In the same way, sometimes God lets you get hurt for your own benefit. It is at that point that you need to understand that even painful events happen with God's permission. It's God who is behind it. That's where you prove that you have total faith. If everything were to go nicely, then everyone would have faith. Where is the proof that you have faith? It should be tested. God will test your faith.

God will test your faith.

Enjoy

So, let's have that complete, total faith. Say, "God, I'm Yours. You make me act. Nothing happens to me in my life without Your doing it. And the entire universe is the same. I know You are the one who is doing everything to everybody. I realize that, too.

First, realize that God is working through you always. Then, you realize that God is the same God working through everybody. If that realization comes, you are completely free from any problem, any botheration.

"Everybody is equal to me. Everybody is loved by me. "

May you all become that kind of realized instrument. Know that God is always working through everyone. Don't project your ego and put that label on yourself, "*I did right; I did wrong.*" No. You couldn't do right or wrong. Just know that and let God work through you. That surrender is the biggest achievement one can have.

Let us all be good instruments. Let us know that God is functioning through us. The simple thing is to leave it to Him. Be at ease. Enjoy that Supreme Love. ■





SURRENDER

by Sri Swami Sivananda

Self-surrender and Grace

Self-surrender is complete surrendering of the self to God. Self-surrender makes the devotee feel the reality of divine grace and the Lord's readiness to bestow help on him or her at all times. The divine influence streams into his or her being and molds it to make it a fit medium for divine realization and divine instrumentality.

Self-surrender is only another name for the effacement of the ego. The essential characteristics of devotion are the consecration of all activities by total self-surrender to the Lord and extreme anguish if the Lord were to be forgotten. Through self-surrender, the devotee becomes one with the personal God, or *saguna Brahman*, just as through self-denial, the *vedantic* [pertaining to the Hindu doctrine of non-dualism] student or aspirant on the path of *Jnana Yoga* [the path of wisdom] becomes one with the impersonal Absolute.

The greater the capacity of surrender to God, the greater will be your joy. Surrender your ego at the lotus feet of the Lord and seek satisfaction only in doing His will. If you think and speak of your own ability, the grace of the Lord will not come to you. The grace descends on a very humble soul who always says, "God does everything. I am an instrument in His hands."

There is no loss in self-surrender. You get everything from the Lord. You enjoy all divine powers of the Lord. The whole wealth of the Lord belongs to you. Supernatural and psychic powers will roll under your feet. You become one with the Lord. You are

freed from all wants and desires and cravings. The spiritually hungry and thirsty aspirant who yearns for the vision of the Lord turns toward the divine and is quite willing, eager and happy to consecrate his body, life, mind and soul at the feet of the Lord.

Divine will is an eternal, unalterable law. Surrender your will at the feet of the Lord. You will know the divine will. The self-surrender must be total, ungrudging and unreserved. You must not keep certain desires for gratification. Mira says: "I have

given my whole heart, mind, intellect, soul, my all to my Giridhar Gopal (Krishna)." This is perfect self-surrender. Mira obtained Lord Krishna's

grace and became one with Him. If you do total, unreserved self-surrender to the Lord every moment of your life, every little action and every movement of the mind will become consecrated to God. You will live for Him and Him alone. When the surrender is complete, God takes complete charge of the devotee and looks after his welfare. He reveals to him His play in the world.

Give up your own obstinate ways. Accept the way of the divine. Annihilate the self-assertive *rajasic* [passionate] ego by increasing *sattva* [purity] and developing humility.

Do not bother about taking care of your body. God will save it if He needs it for further service. Surrender it at His feet and rest in peace. He will take care of it. A real devotee says, "Let me take millions of births. It does not matter. But let me be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord. Let me have spontaneous devotion to the Lord. Let me be

**The greater the capacity
of surrender to God, the
greater will be your joy.**

endowed with purity, spiritual strength, spirit of selfless service, and divine virtues.”

Self-surrender does not mean retirement into the forests. It does not mean giving up of all activities. *Tamas*, or inertia, is mistaken for self-surrender. This is a sad mistake. What is wanted is internal surrender. The ego and desire must be annihilated. This will constitute real surrender.

God helps those who help themselves. The best possible effort that one is capable of exercising under the intellectual circumstances provided by God should be put forth, and only beyond this effort should one seek the grace of God. Idleness is not self-surrender. Surrender of self to God becomes complete only when the individual consciousness is flooded over by love for the Divine. God’s grace descends when the efforts exercised are found to be inadequate in the realization of God.

If you simply say, without real inner feeling, “I am thine, O Lord,” this will not constitute real integral self-surrender. It should come from the core of your heart. You must be prepared for a radical change. You should not stick to your old habits, ways and motives. You should not expect that everything should happen in the way you want. You should live to carry out the divine purpose. You should not think of those ambitions that the mind likes to gratify nor think of using even the divine grace or the divine force for your own purpose. The irrepressible ego will assert in various ways and refuse to give up its old habits and ways. It will try to get everything from the Divine. It will totally decline to give itself to the Divine. The devotee even expects God to do the self-surrender for him! This is mere foolishness only. He will have to do the self-surrender himself. Remember this point well.

Obstinacy is a great obstacle to surrender. The lower nature, again and again, raises up to assert itself. There is resurrection of desires. Desires get suppressed for some time. Again, they manifest with redoubled force. Human beings are dragged

hither and thither by these desires. That is the reason why aspirants do not make any substantial progress on the spiritual path even after doing *sadhana* [spiritual practice] for several years.

Take refuge in the Lord. Take refuge in the names of the Lord. Take refuge in His grace. Take refuge at His lotus feet, the boat that helps you to cross this terrible ocean of *samsara* [worldly life].

God is the lover and the beloved at the same time. He loves the devotee and is the beloved of the latter. God’s love is equally spread over all. It is only those who love God who are aware of the love of God. God is not partial to anyone, but those who pray to Him feel His grace. It is the sincere prayer of the devotee that brings about the materialization of the grace of God. Repeat, “I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done.” Throw all your burdens on Him and be at ease. Do not keep any desires for yourself. Destroy egoism completely by unconditioned, unreserved and ungrudging self-surrender to the Lord. If your surrender is total and sincere, there will be a free flow of divine grace. Surrender and grace are inter-related. Surrender draws down grace and grace makes surrender complete. Surrender starts the purification of the heart. Grace completes it. Without grace the complete unification is not possible. Grace divinizes your being in order that the constant inflow and inspiration can be received and retained. It is through divine grace alone that your whole being is galvanized and rejuvenated.

Believe in the divine possibilities. Completely dedicate yourself to the Lord. Have full trust in Him. Rest in peace. All cares, worries, anxieties, tribulations and egoistic efforts will terminate. Imperfection, defects and weakness even of a serious kind are no bar to spiritual progress. They can be removed through the grace of the Lord.

How to Surrender

If there is delay in the descent of divine light and grace, do not despair. Do not give up the struggle. It is very difficult to say

when, how and on whom the divine grace will descend.

Surrender is not a thing that is done in a week or a month. You cannot make total surrender from the very beginning of your *sadhana*. The first stage of self-surrender is only a firm resolve to surrender oneself to God or to the preceptor. In the beginning, the individual effort is very necessary. The lower nature must be thoroughly overhauled. All old wrong habits must be completely destroyed. Do not make plans and speculations. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Keep the mind and the intellect passive. Become silent. Feel His grace and love and enjoy the divine ecstasy.

Be at ease. Trust the divine grace at every step. Speak to the Lord like a child. Be candid. Open your heart freely to Him. Pray to God sincerely, "O Lord! Make my will strong to resist all temptations, to control my sense organs and lower nature, to change my old evil habits, and to make my surrender complete and real. Enthroned Thyself in my heart. Do not leave this place even for a second. Use my body, mind and organs as instruments. Make me fit to dwell in Thee forever."

Reduce yourself to zero before God. Only then will God completely take care of and guide you.

Renunciation of the family life is the beginning of self-surrender. He who is endowed with burning dispassion and discrimination and is really earnest for his spiritual rejuvenation can also do complete self-surrender even though he is in the world. In and through the world, he realizes the Lord by complete surrender of his entire being to Him. It is only very few who are capable of doing this, because the worldly life is beset with innumerable obstacles and temptations and the aspirant finds it very difficult to attain complete dispassion in the midst of so many dissipations and distractions. Therefore, renunciation of family life makes his path easier

and smoother. The seed is now sown. Then the aspirant goes to his preceptor and falls at his feet. Now the seed germinates. He starts the service of his guru. As he advances in his devotion and sincere service, his surrender becomes more and more perfect and complete. His heart becomes purer and purer.

When surrender has been complete, gradually the light of knowledge dawns in him and he cognizes the supreme Atman, which pervades all and everywhere, the divine grace dawns in him, and the divine

power itself does the *sadhana* for him. The descent of divine grace and power takes complete possession of his mind, will, life and body. Then the

sadhana goes on with tremendous speed.

The actions performed by the seeker after renunciation do not bind him, as he offers all his actions as offerings unto his preceptor or the Lord. He does not do any action that can be considered as selfish. Thus, through service of one's preceptor with utter self-dedication, his heart becomes purified, and, ultimately, the Lord becomes his preceptor. Now, he is completely surrendered to the Lord, and he attains the highest intuition.

Secret of Surrender

Throughout the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is a ringing note that surrender and devotion are absolutely necessary for the attainment of God-consciousness.

The following Gita verses will impress on your mind the importance of devotion and self-surrender:

- *Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata; by His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace, the everlasting dwelling place.* (XVIII-62)
- *Merge thy mind in Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, prostrate thyself before Me. Thou shalt come to Me.* (XVIII-65)
- *Abandoning all duties, come unto Me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins.* (XVIII-66)

Trust the divine grace at every step.

Verses 65 and 66 of Chapter XVIII are the most important verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The gist of the teachings of Lord Krishna is here. If anyone can live in the true spirit of these verses, he or she will realize the goal of life soon. There is no doubt of this.

Verse 66 is a powerful *mantra* that will help the devotee in effecting his self-surrender if he keeps the feeling of it constantly before his mind. It corresponds to the *mantra* of the devotees of Sri Rama, "I surrender myself to Sri Rama," and to the *mantra* of the devotees of Lord Hari, "I surrender myself to Lord Krishna."

Those who repeat the above *mantras* with feeling will soon get the grace of the Lord. They will be able to accomplish perfect self-surrender. And repetition of the following formulae will also help you to make perfect self-surrender: "I am Thine, my Lord. All are thine. Thy will be done." Even if you say once, from the core of your heart, from the central, inner being, with one-pointed devotion, with one hundred per cent of your mind, "I am Thine, my Lord," the gulf that separates you from God will be bridged over at once. The mind, subconscious mind, heart, intellect and soul should all combine harmoniously in effecting the surrender. Then only the self-surrender will be true, complete and perfect.

In reality the nine modes of devotion are reducible to one: self-surrender. The *bhakta* [devotee of the Lord] starts with hearing the stories and attributes of the Lord and slowly ascends the different rungs on the ladder of *Bhakti Yoga* [path of love and devotion to God, to an incarnation of the Divine, or to a spiritual teacher], ultimately to reach the highest rung, self-surrender. The will of the devotee becomes one with the Cosmic Will. The devotee becomes one with the Lord. He or she feels and sees the Lord as Rama in every hair follicle of the body, in every atom and molecule. This state

is unthinkable and indescribable. As the devotee's egoism is totally destroyed, Lord Rama directly speaks and works through the devotee's different organs.

Egoism

The obstacles that stand in the way of self-surrender are desires and egoism. The self-arrogating little ego persists and resists, again and again. It clings leech-like to its old habits, cravings and desires. It wages guerrilla war. It resists surrender. It demands certain objects for its secret gratification and keeps subtle desires for its own silent appeasement.

Introspect and find out the subtle desires that lurk in the corners of your heart through the searchlight of concentra-

tion and discrimination and kill them ruthlessly through regular, silent meditation.

The ego is vulgar and obstinate. It is very difficult to melt it. Constant vigilance and ceaseless effort is necessary to slay this dire enemy of peace and wisdom. If the mind says, "I am Thine, my Lord," if the *buddhi* [intellect] says, "I am Mr. So-and-so; I am an M. L. C.; I know everything; I am a powerful judge," if the subconscious says, "I must have the psychic power to get whatever I want," and if the soul says, "I am a great devotee," you are only a hypocrite. You have not made any kind of self-surrender. Beware of moral and spiritual pride. *Maya* [the Lord's illusory power] assumes various, subtle forms. Moral pride and spiritual pride of aspirants are more dangerous than the ordinary pride of wealth, power and position of worldly-minded persons.

Egoism is the reason why one is not able to make perfect self-surrender and have *darshan* [vision] of his or her *Ishtam* [tutelary deity]. Egoism is like hard granite. It has to be split asunder through constant hammering with the chisel of *bhakti*. Even the very hard diamond is pierced through by another material and a slender wire is passed

The obstacles that stand in the way of self-surrender are desires and egoism.

through the hole in the diamond when a necklace is made. Even so, this hard heart must be pierced through by self-surrender, and the slender thread of *bhakti* must be passed through the hole in the heart.

The self-surrender must be totally unreserved, ungrudging and unconditioned. The whole being should be surrendered. Lord Krishna says, *Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharata*. The subconscious, the ego, the mind, the intellect and the soul should be placed at the feet of the Lord. Then only will He take a seat in the heart of His devotee.

The Real Devotee

A real devotee never complains against God. A raw *bhakta* speaks ill of God when he is in distress. He says: "I have done twenty-five *lakhs* of *Japa* [repetition of a *mantra*], I am studying *Bhagavatam* daily, yet God is not pleased with me. He has not removed my sufferings. God is blind. he has not heard my prayers. What sort of God is Lord Krishna? I have no faith in Him."

A real *bhakta* rejoices in suffering, pain and destitution. He welcomes grief and sorrow always, so that he may not forget God even for a second. He has the firm belief that God does everything for his good only. Kunti Devi prayed to Krishna: "O Lord! Give me pain always. Then only will I remember Thee always."

A real devotee will not ask the Lord even for liberation. So long as the subtle desire for liberation lingers in one's heart, one cannot claim to be a true devotee of the Lord. Though the desire for liberation is of *sattvic* nature, yet the devotee has become a slave of the desire for liberation. He is still selfish and so is unfit to call himself a sincere lover of God. He has not yet made total, unreserved self-surrender. To ask for liberation is a variety of hypocrisy. Can a true devotee dare ask anything from God, when he fully knows that He is an ocean of love and compassion?

In Puri, a saint who completely dedicated himself to Lord Hari was seriously

ailing from chronic dysentery. He became quite helpless. Lord Hari of Puri was serving him for months in the form of a servant. The law of *karma* [cause and effect] is inexorable. Nobody can escape from the operation of this infallible law. The Lord did not want the *bhakta* to take another birth for the exhaustion of his *karma*, so His devotee had to suffer from a protracted ailment. This was his *karmic* purgation. But the Lord Himself served him, as the devotee surrendered himself completely. Look at the unbounded mercy of the Lord. He becomes a slave of His devotees when they entirely depend upon Him.

The Doctrine of Grace

You can notice the Lord's grace in every inch of His creation. In a hot summer, you enjoy the delicious sweet grapes, cucumbers, oranges and pomegranates, and the cool Ganges water of Rishikesh and Haridwar. This is the Lord's grace. When you suffer from any serious ailment, you get immediate relief and cure from herbs. This is the Lord's grace. When you walk on a dark night, the stars twinkle and throw light on your path. This is the Lord's grace. When you are unable to bear extreme pain, you become unconscious. This is the Lord's grace. When the weather is sultry, a gentle breeze blows and refreshes you. This is the Lord's grace.

The Lord's grace will descend in proportion to the degree of surrender. The more the surrender, the more the grace.

The *Kathopanishad* says in a thundering voice: *Not by study or discourses, not by argument, not by intelligence is the Self attained. He whom the Lord chooses attains Self-realization. He reveals Himself to such a chosen person.*

The subtle forms of lust, anger, egoism and pride, and so forth can be totally destroyed only through the grace of the Lord. However hard you may strive and do *sadhana*, these subtle forms cannot be eradicated through your *sadhana* alone. The Lord's grace completely purifies your heart. But you should not sit idle and say, "The Lord's grace will do everything for me.

Why should I do any *sadhana*?" This is wrong philosophy. God helps those who help themselves. God's grace will descend only on those persons who exert. You cannot expect the Lord to do self-surrender for you. Be up and doing. Strive. Plod. Persevere. The Lord will shower His grace upon you. It is the Lord only who stirs the aspirants to right exertion.

Mira abandoned everything; she renounced her kingdom, her husband, relatives, friends and property. She remembered her Lord Krishna the whole day and night. She shed tears of divine love and sang His praises with single-minded devotion.

She gave up food, and her body got emaciated. Her mind was ever absorbed in Lord Krishna. Only then did Lord Krishna shower His grace upon her.

So that people will not become idle and say, "The Lord will do everything for me. Why should I do any *sadhana*? I depend upon His grace alone," Sri Vasistha and others have preached self-effort; but, in reality, it is all the Lord's grace only. Not even a leaf or an atom will move without the sanction of the Lord.

May you all obtain His grace through faith and devotion. May the Lord shower His grace upon you all. ■

*Great beyond description is His Mercy.
He, the Giver, gives all — Himself keeping nothing.
Many the warriors who seek at His door,
Countless the others who come.
Many are they who pass their lives engaged in evil.
Many are those who are granted His favor,
And enjoying themselves, they forsake their
Creator.
Many there are who endure distress and privation,
These too are Thy blessings, O bountiful One.
It is by Thy Will that one's bonds are freed,
And he is granted liberation.
Thy ways are known only to Thee,
And if a man should dare and say he understands,
He will surely suffer by this action of his.
Our needs are known only to Him, and He alone
fulfills.
The one whose heart He has blessed with the song
of His praise,
Before the eyes of the world he's honored as the
King of Kings.*

— Guru Nanak

SURRENDER TO THE SUPREME

by Kumari de Sachy



Of all the branches of Yoga, *Raja Yoga* is considered to be king. Based on moral and ethical perfection and control of the mind, *Raja Yoga* leads, ultimately, to *samadhi*, or the superconscious state. The text that codifies the practices of *Raja Yoga* is *The Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali.

In Book II of *The Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali begins with instructions for *Kriya Yoga*, which refers to certain practical applications that we can incorporate into our daily lives, preparing us for the more subtle practices that he will refer to later on in his text. Patanjali divides the practice of Yoga into eight stages, or limbs, and that is why these *Sutras* are also called *Ashtanga Yoga*, or the eight-limbed Yoga. The eight limbs of Yoga are:

1. *yama* (abstinence)
2. *niyama* (observance)
3. *asana* (posture)
4. *pranayama* (breath control)
5. *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal)
6. *dharana* (concentration)
7. *dhyana* (meditation)
8. *samadhi* (contemplation, absorption or the superconscious state.)

As you can see from the above list, *Yama/Niyama* are the first and second limbs, ensuring that the powerful practices of Yoga are grounded in moral and ethical principles. For *Yama* includes *ahimsa* (non-

violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (continence), *aparigraha* (non-greed), while *Niyama* covers *saucha* (purity), *santosha* (contentment), *tapah* (accepting pain and not causing pain), *svadhyaya* (study of spiritual books), and *Isvara pranidhanam* (surrender to the Supreme Being).

You will note that *Isvara pranidhanam*, surrender to the Supreme Being, is the last *Niyama*. Does this indicate, perhaps, that it is the most difficult of all the observances? Actually, in his commentary to the *Sutras*, Sri Gurudev declares that *Isvara pranidhanam* is an easy path, "simple but great." That is to say, it is pure, plain, uncomplicated; you don't need to perform numerous austerities or immerse yourself in complex philosophical or theological treatises. Simply, surrender to the Supreme. Pure and simple.

But what do we mean by "surrender?" Usually, we think of surrendering as giving up when a situation becomes too difficult to continue or when we are on the losing side of a conflict. Surrendering may also refer to the giving up of a possession to which someone else holds claim. But another definition of surrender is "to give back." And the spiritual seeker, the one who digs deeply into the nature and purpose of life, comes to realize that whatever it is we think we are surrendering or giving up was never ours to begin with; that is, when we feel this urge to surrender to God, we are in reality giving back to God what is in fact already God's. When we make an offering to God at the altar, we are symbolically, with gratitude, offering up what we have been given from

that Supreme Being, the Source from whence all creation springs. Our possessions, our relationships, our knowledge, our very lives come and go, ceaselessly emanating from and flowing back to the Source, whom we call by many names and variously think of as God, Cosmic Consciousness, the Absolute, the Highest Self, the Supreme Being and so forth. Interestingly enough, the Oxford

English Dictionary also defines "to surrender" as: "to give up into the hands of the sovereign." Surrender to the Supreme! Moreover, a synonym for surrender is "yield," which means "to relinquish or give something for the sake of another." And "supreme" is defined in the dictionary as "the highest," "God," "the most exalted," and "the highest intelligence." Thus, surrendering to the Supreme means, plainly and simply, that you dedicate everything you do—the study, the practices, the thoughts, the deeds, the pleasure, the pain, the joys, the sorrows, the successes, the failures—to God or to humanity, which is God manifested. And, as Sri Gurudev teaches, when you offer all things up to God, God not only accepts them but "gives them back many times magnified."

Consequently, surrender to the Supreme requires that we dedicate everything we do to God, so that whatever action we may perform—from the most mundane to the most subtle and from the ridiculous to the sublime—we perform as worship, with the idea of serving all creation. Our eating becomes worship, our sleeping becomes worship, our working becomes worship, the gentle manner with which we handle the objects used in our daily lives becomes worship, the respectful way in which we treat each other becomes worship, *ad infinitum*. If we wished to create a formula to describe this process, it could be: Surrender to the Supreme = Right Attitude.

Surrender to the Supreme equals Right Attitude.

Right attitude. When the sages and scriptures refer to total renunciation, when they counsel us to offer everything up to God, they are not advising us literally to sacrifice all our possessions or to shun name and fame. Rather, they are teaching us that no

matter how much or how little we possess, we should not be mentally attached to anything—including our virtuous and

meritorious deeds—because attachment to anything or anyone binds us, creating an egoistic feeling of "mineness" that causes disturbance in the mind.

Surrendering to the Supreme means transcending our egos by embracing the attitude that "I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done." As Gurudev describes it: "Mine binds. Thine liberates. If you drop 'mines' all over, they will 'undermine' your life—or blow up in your face. But if you change all the "mines" to Thine, you will always be safe." When you are free from attachment and, therefore, free from worry, when the mind is perfectly calm at all times, in every situation, then you will experience Supreme Peace.

Gurudev calls on us all to dedicate our lives for the sake of the entire humanity. "With every minute, with every breath, every atom of our bodies should repeat this *mantram*: dedication, dedication, giving, giving, loving, loving." And he counsels that this is the best Yoga for keeping the mind calm and bringing permanent peace and joy.

In the *Sutras*, Patanjali says that "by total surrender to God, *samadhi* is attained." It's easy. All you have to do is to follow Lord Krishna's recommendation in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Do everything in My name. Then you will get peace and joy."

May we all live every moment in the Light of the Lord, joyfully dedicating the fruits of our actions to the Supreme, the Indweller of all beings. ■

REAL SURRENDER

A beautiful story in the ancient Hindu scripture, the Mahabharata, clearly teaches what is meant by real surrender to God. This story is included in an upcoming collection of Sri Gurudev's teaching stories.

The Pandavas and the Kauravas were cousins in the royal family. After the death of the Pandavas' father, all the children were raised together in one household. The Pandavas were loved by all for their virtue and valor, and this made their cousins jealous. The eldest of the Kauravas, Duryodhana, couldn't bear the growing wealth and renown of the Pandavas and plotted to dishonor them.

The eldest Pandava, Yudhisthira, was tricked into playing a game of dice in which he lost all that he had, including his wife. Draupadi, his beautiful queen, was dragged into the court. In the ancient days, when you wanted to show that you had won a victory over someone, you did something that would damage his reputation. So Duryodhana decided to put Draupadi to shame by stripping off her sari. By doing this, he would ruin the reputation of the Pandavas.

A sari is six or seven yards of material that is gracefully wrapped around and tucked in with delicate folds. Duryodhana's brother began to pull Draupadi's sari, and though

she was clutching it tightly, very soon he succeeded in pulling out one round and, then, almost a second round of the sari. Draupadi was very frightened. She was calling out to God in the form of Lord Krishna. "Krishna, Krishna!" she cried, but her cries went unanswered. In another minute, the entire sari would be pulled off. Her strength could never match her assailant's.

Realizing the situation, Draupadi thought to herself, "This is the final round of my sari. If I lose this, also, I will be disgraced." In that moment, a great realization dawned: "What am I doing? I cannot take care of myself any more. Lord Krishna, if you want me to face this disgrace, I will accept that. I totally trust you; my life is in your hands." And, with that, she let go of the sari and held up her hands, crying, "Krishna!"

Draupadi just stood there, calling and crying to Lord Krishna, while Duryodhana's brother mercilessly pulled the last round of her sari. But, as he pulled, the cloth kept coming. After the last round, there was another, and another, and still another. He pulled again and again, yet there seemed to be no end to the sari. He was pulling and pulling and pulling. Yards and yards and yards of sari seemed to be coming from somewhere. He was soon exhausted and could pull no more. Draupadi was saved. ■

Even God cannot come to help you as long as you have faith in your own strength. Complete surrender means to give up totally and depend entirely on God.

— Sri Swami Satchidananda



ACCEPTANCE

*When the spent sun throws up its rays on cloud
And goes down burning into the gulf below,
No voice in nature is heard to cry aloud
At what has happened. Birds, at least, must know
It is the change to darkness in the sky.
Murmuring something quiet in her breast,
One bird begins to close a faded eye;
Or overtaken too far from his nest,
Hurrying low above the grove, some waif
Swoops just in time to his remembered tree.
At most he thinks or twitters softly, 'Safe!
Now let the night be dark for all of me.
Let the night be too dark for me to see
Into the future. Let what will be, be.'*

— Robert Frost

WHAT CAN REALLY MOTIVATE ONE TO WORK WITH DEVOTION?

by O. R. Krishnaswami

What can really motivate us to work with devotion, to give our best and to work hard? Can monetary rewards, as suggested by behavioral scientists, really motivate us to do so? Can non-monetary rewards like power, recognition, a pat on the back, and so forth, motivate us to work with devotion?

No doubt, such external rewards have some impact, especially in attracting people to some ventures or jobs

and to stay longer in them. However, these external rewards do not have any lasting impact on one's work-effectiveness, sincerity, and devotion.

On the other hand, the so-called external rewards or incentives can be harmful to us. How? For example, when we expect some result or reward and do not get it or when what we get is less than what we expected, we feel frustrated, disappointed and depressed. On the other hand, when the actual return/reward is much more than we expected, we may feel excited or elated. But that joy is only momentary, as it gives rise to the anxiety of how to use the windfall reward.

Such mental modifications—frustration, disappointment, elation and anxiety—can also have a negative impact on our mental and physical health. We lose our peace of mind and happiness, and, in the long run, we may become seriously ill with such diseases as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, etc.

But just when do we become subject to that kind of excitement/disappointment, elation/depression, and the consequent health problems that follow? When we wrongly identify our Self with our body and mind and when we work for selfish motives. Then, we think that we are the “doer” and that the

reward for our work belongs to us. This wrong notion about our Self and the wrong attitude toward work can

**Always, in all things, we
should hold God as the doer.**

never give us lasting inner peace and joy, nor the motivation to work with devotion.

What, then, should be our attitude toward work? That we are not the doer. Always, in all things, we should hold God as the doer. We are just instruments in His hands. It is a matter of inner attitude. We should feel that God is acting through us, that what we do is God's work. With this awareness, if we work, we do not get attached to the work's reward.

Attachment is the cause of misery; non-attachment is the means for liberation. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna says, “Thy right is to work only but never with [attachment to] its fruits; let not the fruits of actions be thy motive, nor thy attachment be to inaction.” Therefore, our duty is to perform the work, without looking for its fruits. As Sri Gurudev points out, claiming the fruits of our actions is the “forbidden fruit” spoken of in the Bible.

The performance of work without any selfish motive converts work into Yoga. Work becomes *Karma Yoga*. But how can we achieve this? How can we practice non-attachment and develop our Sri Gurudev's 3-D formula—discipline, devotion and dedication—in our daily life? Swami Vivekananda says, "The best way to put non-attachment, dispassion into practice is to look upon work as worship."¹ What a beautiful approach! We can worship God not just for a few minutes in the morning and evening only, but all through the day, by offering our work as worship. When we offer a flower or fruit to God, while worshipping Him, we offer it with great devotion and dedication. In the same way, when we dedicate and offer our work and its fruit to the Lord, we will certainly take extra care to perform it with a sense of utmost devotion.

Is there anything else that can so motivate us to work with all sincerity and devotion? No. Nothing else.

When we perform work as worship, our mind is freed from desire and passion, and it becomes calm and serene. The calmer we are, the better it is for us and greater is the amount of work that we can do. "When we let loose our feelings," to quote Swami Vivekananda, "we waste much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our mind, and accomplish very little. . . It is only a calm, equable, well-balanced mind that does the greatest amount of work."² ■

¹Swami Nikhilananda, ed., *Vivekananda: The Yoga and other Works* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1953, p. 475).

²*Ibid.*, p. 339.



*If You make me sing, I sing;
If You make me serve, I serve
Oh my Master,
If You make me have union with You,
I have union with You;
If You torment me, I am tormented;
If You feed me any particular food,
I feed on it;
If You make me sleep, I sleep;
You keep actuating me like a puppet,
Alas, what can this lowly fellow do!...*

*Whether You bestow bliss in good measure
And place me in a state of grace
Or You torment me here,
Alas, what can I do about it
Other than setting my foolish mind at rest
In the faith that Your grace alone
Is my succor?
Oh my Love, Oh my Mother,
Oh my Father Who witnesses everything,
What can be done by this lowly fellow!*

— St. Ramalingam

PASSOVER/EASTER REFLECTIONS

by Swami Gurucharanananda



What causes suffering? Attachments, fear of loss, selfishness, these qualities all bring about pain and suffering in our lives. Whenever we rely on someone or some-

thing "outside" of ourselves to make us happy, then we are courting sorrow, disappointment and suffering. Traditionally, the symbolism of Passover, Easter and the Promised Land reflect the cycle of suffering and release that we experience in our own lives.

For example, during all the years that the Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt, they suffered loss of loved ones, rejection, hatred, hunger, physical and mental cruelty, the pain of bondage, and ignorance of the true nature of their suffering. Finally, there came the deep cry for deliverance, for the freedom of spirit that puts the Divine above all, for the readiness to "let go" of all worldly attachments, securities and dependencies that were binding them in slavery: "Free us, O Lord, our God." Their depth of pain and sorrow manifested as this cry from the heart of the people, and God responded.

They were released from Pharaoh's rule, that is, from selfish desires, attachments, bondage; and, finally, they reached the Promised Land, symbolizing the life of faith, of loving surrender and reliance on God's guidance and care.

Yet, we look in disbelief at how short-lived and fickle this "letting go" was for many of the people. For as the security of the

familiar—the daily routines and the bondage of illusions that perpetuated their slavery—broke away, many were overcome by the Tempter: fear. Thus, they rose up in anger, complaining and dissenting, even expressing the "longing to return to the fleshpots of Egypt."

The lessons of the Passover wanderings represent a true, liberating test of "letting go" for those who were ready for the next stage of their spiritual journey. The years in the desert—a time and place of dryness and difficulty—called for trust, cooperation, patience, and compliance with God's guidance, given both clearly and in mysterious ways. A period of testing, or Passover, preceded any entrance into the Promised Land, which we may also call Easter, a time of renewal, liberation and joy.

But how do these ancient biblical events relate to our own life experience? If we look closely, we recognize the same pattern occurring over and over again in our lives: ignorance, suffering, joy, ignorance, suffering, joy, ignorance, suffering, joy. . . . Isn't there a way to end this cycle?

There is a way! We have heard it and read it; we have vicariously experienced it through scriptural stories and through the teachings of our beloved spiritual master, Sri Swami Satchidananda Maharaj. Then why is there this problem? The age-old proverb gives us a clue: "Many are called; few are chosen," or, as Sri Gurudev says, "All are called; few respond."

The crux of the situation is that few people truly want to be "healed," to be liberated, to end their suffering. Attached to our attachments, fascinated by our illusions, stuck

in our conditioned ways of thinking and acting, we ensure that the cycle continues and gains momentum. And even though we have such holy seasons, such reflective periods as Rosh Hashonna, Yom Kippur, Passover, Advent, Lent, Ramadan, Navaratri, and other holidays, when our minds are challenged by the Truth, by the Peace and Bliss of the liberated life in God, our choices and decisions are half-hearted. We don't easily "give it up!" We compromise, rationalize, procrastinate, fool ourselves. Meanwhile, the suffering and pain get worse and worse.

However—if we can recognize the signals—suffering and pain are our friends. They are only warning us of harmful situations that need to be corrected. These periods are given to us as opportunities to change; these are our Passovers. In fact, our greatest growth comes during these periods.

So, use suffering, face it, observe it, even analyze it to understand its purpose. We can use these precious insights to know

ourselves better, allowing this knowledge to transform us, strengthening our resolve to seek God, our Peace, Joy and Light in each present moment.

As this awareness and dedication deepen, we find ourselves entering the Promised Land! We experience, on many levels, the land overflowing with milk and honey, that is, sustenance, sweetness, health, prosperity, right effort, harmony, happiness, selfless service, faith and contentment. Still, as Meister Eckhart reminds us, life, no matter how blessed, includes some suffering. But to the one who has stepped into the Passover stage, it is understood to be for the good. Meister Eckhart says of this life: "A life of rest and peace in God is good. A life of pain borne in patience is still better; but to have Peace even in a life of pain is best of all!"

This is the Enlightenment Experience in God. This is our Easter, our New Life, beginning here and now! ■

LENT: FASTING AND FEASTING

by William Arthur Ward

Lent should be more than a time of fasting. It should also be a joyous season of feasting. Lent is a time to *fast from* certain things and to *feast on* others. It is a season in which we should:

- Fast from judging others; feast on the Christ indwelling in them.
- Fast from emphasis on difference; feast on the unity of all life.
- Fast from apparent darkness; feast on the reality of light.
- Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.
- Fast from words that pollute; feast on the phrases that purify.
- Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.
- Fast from anger; feast on patience.
- Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.
- Fast from worry; feast on divine order.
- Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.
- Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.
- Fast from hostility; feast on non-resistance.
- Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.
- Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.
- Fast from self-concern; feast on compassion for others.
- Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal Truth.
- Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.
- Fast from facts that depress; feast on verities that uplift.
- Fast from lethargy; feast on enthusiasm.
- Fast from suspicion; feast on truth.
- Fast from thoughts that weaken; feast on promises that inspire.
- Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of serenity.
- Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.
- Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that undergirds.

RAMADAN



Islam originated in Arabia and, today, is one of the most widely dispersed religions in the world, with an estimated following of three-quarters of a billion people. Islam

extends from North Africa to the Philippines, including among its followers different races and peoples from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. The correct term for its adherents is Muslims.

The word "Islam" derives from a root term in Arabic that has two meanings: surrender (or submission) and peace. A "Muslim," then, is one who has surrendered or submitted to the will and guidance of God, thus attaining peace of mind and soul.

After the death of the prophet Muhammed, the historic founder of Islam, five basic religious duties were selected to serve as the essential acts of worship or obedience demanded of a Muslim. These religious duties are referred to as "The Five Pillars" of Islam, and they consist of:

- Profession of faith
- Prayer
- Almsgiving
- Fasting
- Pilgrimage

The fourth duty of a Muslim is to fast during the entire twenty-nine days of the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sexual intercourse during the day, but these proscriptions are lifted between sunset and sunrise.

Tradition has it that it was in this month, Ramadan, that the prophet Muhammed re-

ceived his first revelations. Consequently, fasting during this month is considered to be thirty times more efficacious than at any other period. During the entire twenty-nine days of Ramadan, all adults fast from sunrise to sunset; only the children, nursing or pregnant mothers, the sick, the aged, and travelers are exempt. The end of each day of abstinence is celebrated joyfully.

Additionally, most pious Muslims observe "withdrawal to a mosque," especially during the last ten days of the fast. This retreat commemorates the first revelation of Muhammed and is identified as the "night of power." A three-day festival immediately follows the end of the fast period, and everyone joins in a celebration marked by feasting and merriment.

Muslims consider a period of fasting, especially during Ramadan, to be one of the most important external characteristics of Islamic religious life. ■

*O Lord, grant us to love
Thee; grant that we may love
those that love Thee; grant
that we may do the deeds that
win Thy love. Make the love
of Thee to be dearer to us
than ourselves, than our
families, than wealth, and
even than cool water.*

— Muhammad

YOGA AND HEALTH

HEALING MENTAL ILLNESS

THROUGH YOGA

by Sri Swami Satchidananda



Recently, someone asked me what I would recommend, from the yogic perspective, to heal such mental illnesses as depression and schizophrenia, conditions caused

by a chemical imbalance in the brain, and also whether I would recommend meditation in such cases.

Regarding meditation, I don't know if a person suffering from such illnesses would even be able to meditate. But I would suggest that here we can allow the person to learn a few chants. Singing or chanting any holy name will, through the nice vibration, comfort the mind, heal the mind.

As to medication, medicine does only a temporary job. Temporarily, we stop the problem, but we don't cure it; and the medication, itself, creates more problems. So, medication is not the answer. Of course, that's what doctors prescribe when they cannot do anything else: at least give some medication; let the person be quiet. But that never cures the problem.

What would be beneficial, then? The person would benefit greatly if he or she were to do some breathing practices, because breathing, itself, should calm the mind, thus removing the imbalance of the mind. He or she could do some *asana* [physical

postures], too, as well as *pranayama* [breathing techniques], and some chanting. Yes, chanting. I would recommend more of the chanting. Even if the person cannot chant, let others chant around him or her. The sound vibrations will bring healing vibrations to the patient, like with a baby. When a baby doesn't want to sleep, you sing a lullaby, which acts on the mind, putting the baby to sleep. Likewise, a snake is charmed by music. A cow is made to milk more by music. Plants grow with music.

Sound vibrations are very powerful. In fact, in our own lives, we should know what kind of sound we should use: all the peaceful, gentle chants. Not, "Boom, boom!" When you sing rock and roll, what do you do? You rock and roll! It doesn't bring any balance into you. Gregorian chants, for example; how soothing they are. So, chanting holy names would be very, very beneficial.

And, of course, I always mention that diet is also very important. Clean, *sattwic* diet, as we say. A well-balanced, clean diet will bring peace into the body, as opposed to *rajasic* [*rajas* refers to the quality of activity or restlessness] and *tamasic* [*tamas* refers to the quality of inertia or sluggishness] food. Without the proper diet, all other practices will take a longer time to effect change; and, sometimes, they may not even act because, as we know, our bodies—as well as our minds—are made by the diet we eat. That's why there's a saying: "You are what you eat."

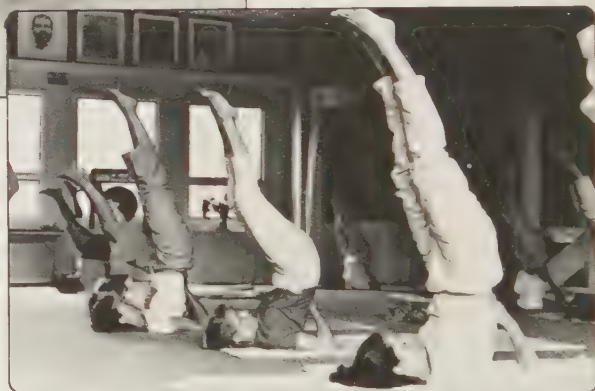
A peaceful, *sattwic* diet will bring you a peaceful mind. You can see that in the animal kingdom, where all the vegetarian animals are peace-loving creatures; they just roam peacefully. On the other hand, all the non-vegetarian animals roam restlessly,

caged even in the zoo. Those qualities represent the effects on our bodies of the food that we eat. So, diet restrictions, a little *asana*, *pranayama*, chanting. All these practices will certainly help the patient suffering from mental illness. ■



Pranayama: Nadi Sudhi
(Alternate nostril breathing)

Asana: Sarvangasana
(Shoulder stand)



RELAX—LET GO

Many modern people cannot relax. If one asks them to sit, stand, or lie still, they find it impossible. They must twitch a muscle, brush away an imaginary fly, scratch their nose, twiddle their thumbs—anything to avoid stillness and silence. Of course, they are victims of the modern lifestyle, which is based on excessive motion and speed. Not only do we move our bodies quickly through space in modern, unnatural transport methods, we also move our minds and emotions unnaturally and with great speed through experiences via the modern media. The very first step in learning to relax is thus: slow down. The second is: be quiet. But how many can take even these first two steps? Hypnotized by modern advertisements, when they wish to relax, they think that they should reach for a cigarette or an alcoholic drink. Even animals know how to relax. But man? He has perverted even this basic instinct. ■

— Sri Swami Gitananda, *Yoga Life*, vol. 24, no. 9, Pondicerry, India

VIDYALAYAM CORNER

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

by Prabhu Adie



The following, continued from the last issue of the magazine, comes from a biography of St. Francis composed by Prabhu Adie, son of Parameshwari and Sadasiva

Adie. Prabhu wrote this nineteen-page biography when he was ten years old.

The Perfect Joy

One day, when Francesco and Leo were walking in the rain on a muddy road, they saw a monastery in the distance. Leo said, "I hope the doorkeeper will take pity on us and let us in."

They walked for a little bit, and then Francesco asked, "Do you know what perfect joy is?" Leo thought in his mind, "If the doorkeeper would let us in and give us some warm food and wine, that would be perfect joy." They stumbled on for a few more paces, then Francesco said, "Curing the lepers and giving the blind sight, that is not perfect joy." They walked on, and Francesco added, "Are you listening Brother Leo? Talking to the animals or flying with the birds, that is not perfect joy." Leo was losing his patience, so he asked, "Then what is perfect joy, Francesco?" "You will soon find out," Francesco answered.

When they got to the monastery, Francesco rang the little bell. They heard footsteps and a gruff voice said, "Who is it at this hour?"

"We are the servants of God," said Francesco.

"Hah! You're probably thieves and monk killers!"

"In the name of Christ, open the gate!" said Leo.

"Okay; you've asked for it!"

The doorkeeper took a club, came out of the monastery, and started beating Francesco. And Francesco kept saying, "More, more! May God praise you!"

After the doorkeeper finished beating Francesco, he said to Leo, "Your turn." Leo raised his staff to protect himself, but Francesco said, "Let him do his job! God sent him to beat us!" The doorkeeper took his club and whacked Leo until he could hear Leo's bones cracking. When the doorkeeper went back to the monastery, Francesco said, "That, Leo, was perfect joy." ■

(to be continued in the next issue)

I beseech Thee, O Lord, that the fiery and sweet strength of Thy love may absorb my soul from all things that are under heaven, that I may die for love of Thy love as Thou didst deign to die for love of my love.

— St Francis of Assisi

INTEGRAL YOGA INTERNATIONAL

Integral Yoga Institute Nallur, Sri Lanka

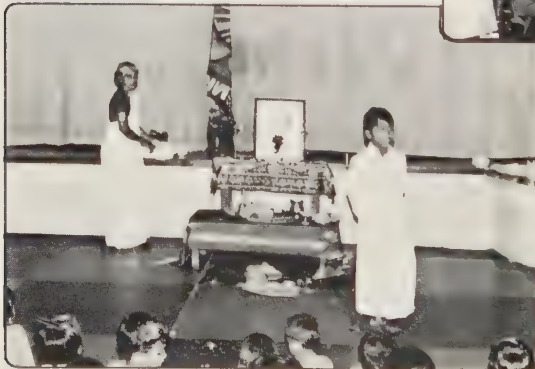
Recently, we received a letter from Mrs. K. Soorasangaram of the Integral Yoga Institute, "Arulagam," Nallur, Sri Lanka. Mrs. Soorasangaram, a long-time IYI member, reported that the Satchidananda Chiruvam Sangam (Children's Society) and the Integral Yoga Institute celebrated Guru

Poornima on 30 August, at which time they also elected officers. Mrs. Soorasangaram directed and sponsored the program. Also IYI members assembled to celebrate Sri Gurudev's Jayanthi on 22 December at Jaffna Divine Life Society Hall. Mrs. Soorasangaram, who also sent these lovely photographs, wishes us all peace and joy and a happy and prosperous New Year. ■



Mrs. Soorasangaram with members of the Satchidananda Chiruvam Sangam during the observance of Guru Poornima.

Nallur IYI members pose during Guru Poornima festivities.



The oldest and youngest members of the IYI joined together in observance of Sri Gurudev's Jayanthi.

INTEGRAL YOGA HIGHLIGHTS

SUN, FUN AND CULTURE AT YOGAVILLE

For the past six summers, people of all ages and from all over the United States and abroad have gathered at Yogaville to participate in two unique events: The Bharata Natyam Dance Camp and the Summer Program for Children.



Bharata Natyam Dance Camp

Each summer the Yogaville Fine Arts Society welcomes the world-renowned Dhananjayans, a dynamic husband and wife duo, master dancers and teachers of Bharata Natyam, the South Indian classical dance form. The Dhananjayans, who direct the Bharata Kalanjali in Madras, India, receive both inexperienced and experienced students, age ten and over. Padmarani Rasiah, a senior disciple of the Dhananjayans and the Fine Arts Society resident dance instructor, assists during camp. While Bharata Natyam, itself, is considered to be a form of Yoga, campers

also experience other Yoga practices, including Hatha Yoga, meditation, and chanting, and they enjoy the company of fellow campers during picnics and outings.

If you would like to study classical Indian dance under the tutelage of the masters, to immerse yourself for one month in the culture of India, and to experience Yoga in action in the lovely, tranquil environment of Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville, then, by all means, join us this summer, July 16 - August 14. For more information, please contact the Fine Arts Society, Route 1, Box 1720, Buckingham, Virginia 23921, (804) 969-3210.



Summer Program for Children

Since 1989, the Summer Program for Children has offered parents the opportunity to give their children all the joys of summer camp in a spiritual setting, where each child's unique gifts are recognized, acknowledged and nurtured.

Campers enjoy such fun-filled, traditional camp activities as swimming, canoeing, hiking, campfire, arts and crafts, and sports. But what makes this camp experi-

ence unique is that the children also practice Hatha Yoga, meditation, deep relaxation and chanting, and they learn, from an experienced, dedicated staff, how to integrate the yogic principles into their daily life.

So, if you would like to give your children the gift of Yoga, as well as the experience of summer camp, contact Kumari de Satchi, Summer Program for Children, Route 1, Box 1720, Buckingham, Virginia 23921, (804) 969-1200 or (804) 969-3121. ■



FROM THE FLOWERING OF THE ROD

*In resurrection, there is confusion
if we start to argue; if we stand and stare,*

*we do not know where to go;
in resurrection, there is simple affirmation,*

*but do not delay to round up the others,
up and down the street; your going,*

*in a moment like this, is the best proof
that you know the way;*

*does the first wild-goose stop to explain
to the others? no—he is off;*

*they follow or not,
that is their affair;*

*does the first wild-goose care
whether the others follow or not?*

*I don't think so—he is so happy to be off—
he knows where he is going:*

*so we must be drawn or we must fly,
like the snow-geese of the Arctic circle,*

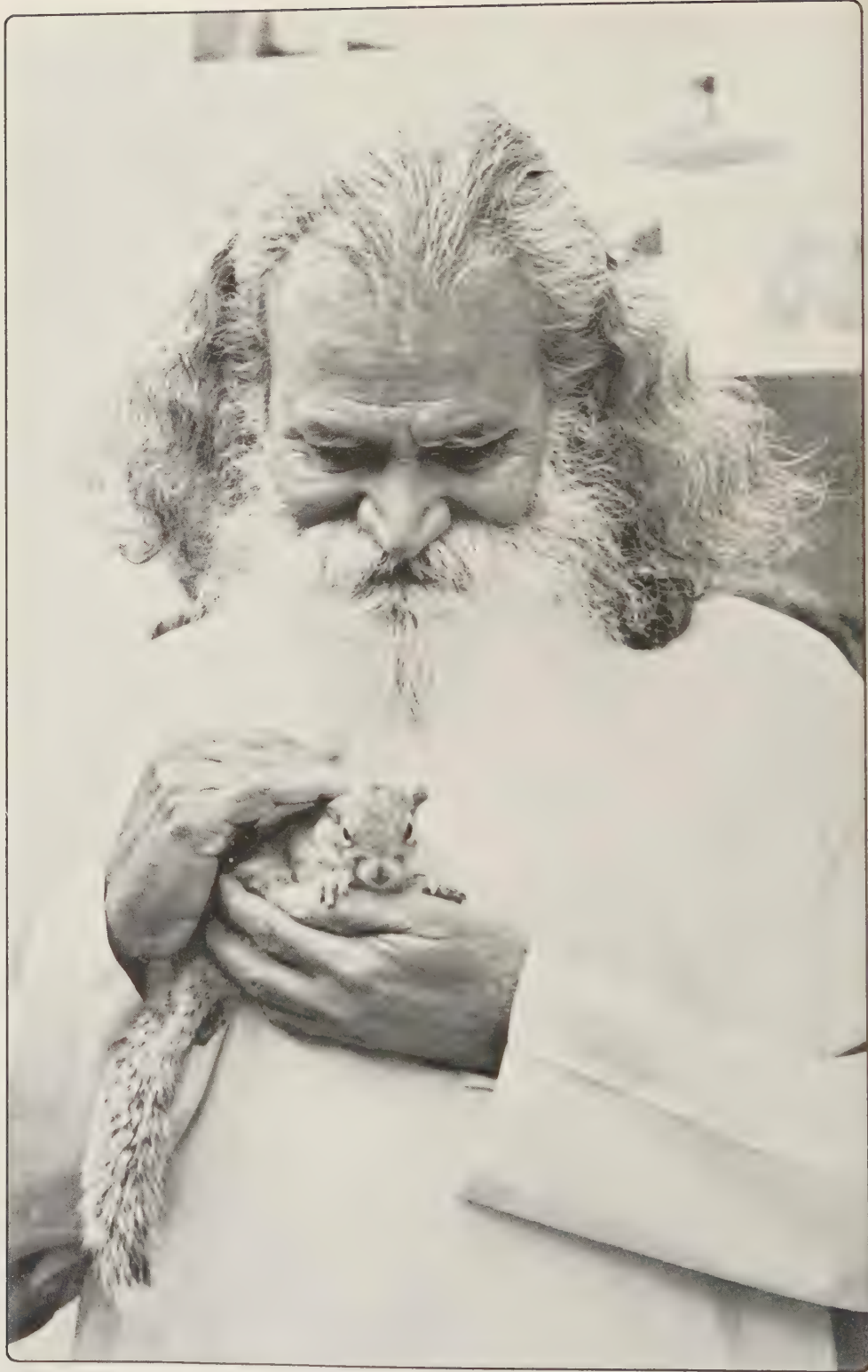
*to the Carolinas or to Florida,
or like those migratory flocks*

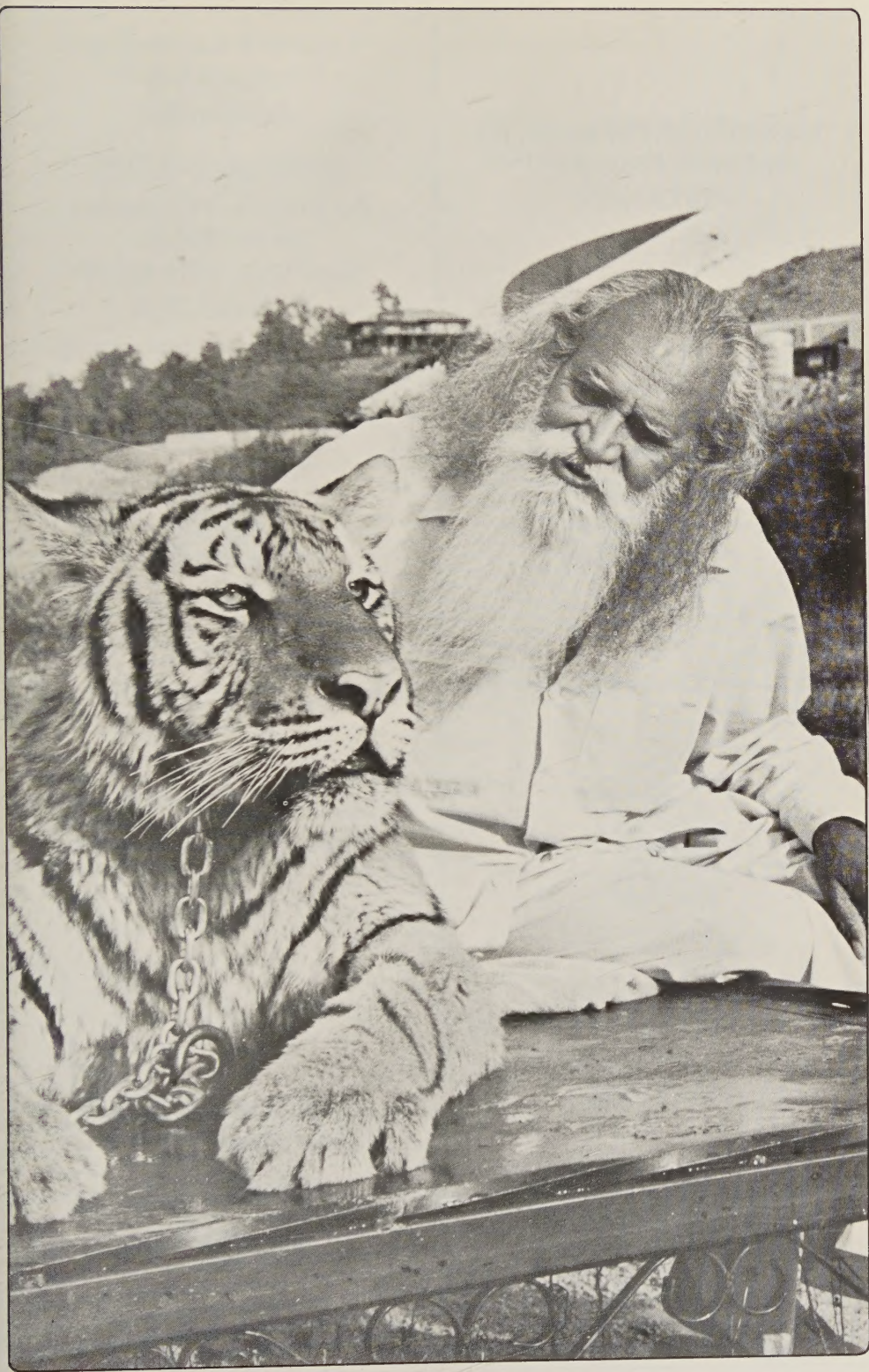
*who still (they say) hover
over the lost island, Atlantis;*

*seeking what we once knew,
we know ultimately we will find*

*happiness; today shalt thou be
with me in Paradise.*

— Hilda Doolittle





**"It's easy to give up things; it's
hard to hold onto them."**

—Sri Gurudev

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—Sri Gurudev

"Let God work through you."

—Sri Gurudev

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instrument of God."

—Sri Gurudev

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"When God prompts you
to do something, do it."

—Sri Gurudev

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